

Good News Daily

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Sunday, July 22

Joshua 6:15-27 *Suddenly, the walls of Jericho collapsed, and the Israelites charged straight into the town and captured it.* (v.20b NLT).

Joshua and Caleb were among the twelve scouts Moses sent to check out the Promised Land. Ten of the scouts came back in fear saying, “The land is inhabited by giants.” Joshua and Caleb came back saying the Lord will help us conquer this wonderful land of “milk and honey.”

The leadership of Israel has now passed to Joshua. After crossing the Jordan River, they needed to take the strong city of Jericho. God gave Joshua His plan: the Israelite army is to march around Jericho once a day for seven days with seven priests walking ahead of the Ark of the Covenant, carrying a ram’s horn. On the seventh day the people are to march around the city seven times. When the priests give one long blast on the horns all the people are to give a mighty shout (which they did) and the walls came tumbling down! Doubters will say it was an earthquake or a tornado, but our God is the Creator of all nature as well, so no matter how He chose to do it, the walls of Jericho came down!

But notice how Joshua and the people had to obey the Lord’s specific instructions. Following God’s rules works! Dear Lord, help us obey You even when the world thinks what we are doing is strange.

Psalms 63, 98; Acts 22:30—23:11; Mark 2:1-12

Monday, July 23

Joshua 7:1-13 *But Israel was unfaithful concerning the things set apart for the LORD.* (v.1).

When Jericho was destroyed, God commanded that only the silver, gold, bronze, and iron items were to be saved, and they were to be brought to the Lord’s treasury. Achan and his family stole some of these items and hid them under their tent, and then lied about what they had done. When Israel attacked the next small city of Ai they were soundly defeated. When Joshua cried out to the Lord, he was informed that Israel had sinned and broken the covenant, so the whole nation had to be punished.

Are we withholding our time, talent, and treasure from the Lord? Is there a Sunday School teacher needed in your church? Does the choir need more altos or tenors? Have we been faithful in our pledge? Do some elderly members need a ride to church? Remember that we are blessed in order to be a blessing to others. May God not have to punish us because we have been

unfaithful about the gifts He has given us to share with others. Dear Lord, forgive my unfaithfulness and help me always share what You have given me.

Psalms 41, 52; Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 26:36-46

Tuesday, July 24

Joshua 8:1-22 *Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged."* (v.1a)

After Israel repented, Joshua (whose name means "God saves") again led the Israelite army against the city of Ai and God gave them a resounding victory.

Our Heavenly Father is the God of the Second Chance. Over and over He gives us chances to repent and reclaim His blessings just as He did for the people of Israel. He is the Redeemer God who can bring good out of our mistakes and fumbles. He forgives our sin and heals us. He gives new opportunities and takes away the remembrance of our failures as far as the east is from the west.

With our news reports full of wars, economic problems, health concerns, accidents, and scandals we can take comfort in the Lord's words to Joshua: "Do not be afraid or discouraged." God is still in control, even though we live in a fallen world. He is still the Redeemer God in the 21st century. 1 Peter 5:7 reminds us to give all our worries and cares to God, for He cares about what happens to us. Thank You, Lord, for redeeming and giving the second chance.

Psalms 45; Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 26:47-56

Wednesday, July 25

Joshua 8:30-35 *Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord...for blessing the people of Israel.* (vv.30, 33).

The altar is such a focal point for worship. It almost always has a cross at the center, reminding us of Jesus paying the price for our sin. It usually has candles symbolizing Jesus the light of the world. From it is served the bread and cup of the Holy Communion, giving us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. On it we place our tithes and offerings. From it our pastor or priest proclaims God's blessing.

Symbols are important in our faith: The Christmas wreaths reminding us of God's love that is everlasting, it has no beginning and no end. The Christmas lights that, again, remind us of Jesus the light to our dark world. The evergreens that remind us of everlasting life with our Heavenly Father. The liturgical colors: red representing Jesus' shed blood, purple for the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent, white for purity, green for growth. And the beautiful stained-glass windows with the images of the saints, which

the little Sunday School child described as “the people the light shines through!” Dear Jesus, may your light shine through me.

Psalm 119:49-72; Romans 14:13-23; Matthew 26:57-68

Thursday, July 26

Joshua 9:3-21 *So the Israelite leaders examined their [the Gibeonites'] bread, but they did not consult the LORD.* (v.14).

When the Gibeonites heard about Joshua and the Israelite victories at Jericho and Ai, they devised a plan to deceive Israel into signing a peace treaty with them. They sent their ambassadors in ragged clothes and worn out sandals. They used weathered saddlebags on their donkeys and old patched wineskins. They took dry, moldy bread and pretended to be from a very distant country.

Joshua and the Israelites did not pray about their decision, and signed a peace treaty with a binding oath. Three days later the true facts came out—the Gibeonites were a nearby nation. Because of the treaty, Israel did not destroy them, but did require them to become Israel’s servants. They had to chop wood and carry water for the tabernacle (at least they could hear about God while they worked).

How many times have we made a big decision and not consulted the Lord? How many times have we been deceived into sin? (No one will know. It won’t hurt anybody. Everyone is doing it.) Forgive us, Lord, for not consulting You on our decisions and protect us from being deceived into sin.

Psalm 50; Romans 15:1-13; Matthew 26:69-75

Friday, July 27

Joshua 9:22—10:15 *So the sun and moon stood still until the Israelites had defeated their enemies.* (v.13a)

Joshua is no doubt recording a miracle rather than a natural phenomenon. Our God, who created the universe and set in place the laws of nature, could also suspend those laws for His purposes even if we wonder how the earth could stop its rotation. Verses 13b-14a say, “The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not set as on a normal day. Never before or since has there been a day like that one, when the Lord answered such a request from a human being.”

At our healing service, we have had many people needing surgery for cancer who, after much prayer, report to the hospital for another scan before surgery and find the tumor gone. Unbelievers say, “The imaging device must not have been working the day of the first exam.” Believers just praise the Lord! Thank You, Lord, that You are the God of miracles.

Psalms 40, 54; Romans 15:14-24; Matthew 27:1-10

Saturday, July 28

Joshua 23:1-16 *So be very careful to love the LORD your God.* (v.11)

Joshua assembled the people to give his final words to Israel. He tells them to be very careful to follow all the instructions written in the Book of the Law of Moses. The very first commandment God gave to His people was, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

Joshua continues his advice, reminding the people of God’s faithfulness and warns about the dangers of friendship with the world. We, too, have to make a conscious choice to follow God or the world will squeeze us into its mold. Perseverance is required of believers. Being baptized or confirmed or making a profession of faith is just the start. We need to “walk the talk,” living out our faith 24/7, not just on Sunday morning.

Joshua’s decision in 24:15 should be one we all make: “As for me and my family, we will serve the LORD.”

Psalm 55; Romans 15:25-33; Matthew 27:11-23

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